

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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October 22, 2007

Mr. Ron Kosinski
Deputy District Director
California Department of Transportation, District 7
100 South Main Street
Los Angeles, California 90012-3606

**Skirball Trailhead at the Skirball Center Drive Overcrossing – I-405 Sepulveda Pass
Project Section 4(f) Determination**

Dear Mr. Kosinski:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) appreciates the collaboration and cooperation with Caltrans in the design and construction of the Skirball Center Drive wildlife bridge across I-405. The Conservancy has reviewed the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation and agrees that the proposed project alternatives would have only a temporary occupancy and would not constitute a “use” of this resource as defined by Section 4(f). However, the Conservancy respectfully requests two additions to the mitigation measures specifically for the Skirball Trailhead at the Skirball Center Overcrossing. Pending incorporation of the updated mitigation measures, the Conservancy intends to sign the agreement determining that the proposed project alternatives would have only temporary occupancy of the Skirball Trailhead, and that this occupancy would not constitute a use of this resource as defined by Section 4(f).

The Conservancy requests that the mitigation measures for the Skirball Center Drive Overcrossing include Caltrans constructing an integrated trail into the new manufactured slope on the east end of the bridge. The integrated trail should be 7-feet wide and not to exceed eight percent grade from Skirball Center Drive to the low drainage area located less than 100-feet southward. According to your staff the 1996 Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Sepulveda Pass Trailhead Project budget shows \$26,200 went into the original project planning, design, and construction of the Skirball Center Drive Trailhead. Inclusion of the trail construction will cover the difference of inflation since the award of the grant.

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The mitigation measures also list that the existing trailhead slope would be graded, filled, and re-vegetated to accommodate the widening of Skirball Center Drive overpass and freeway. In conjunction with Caltrans, we request this measure include that our staff will design and plan the restoration of the Skirball Trailhead area under the direction of our Deputy Director of Natural Resources and Planning.

We respectfully request that the Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation integrate our two mitigation requests, in whole, to the mitigation measures listed for the Skirball Center Drive Overcrossing. The Conservancy continues looking forward in working with Caltrans on this matter. Please direct any questions or future correspondence to Paul Edelman at (310) 589-3200, ext. 128.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH CHEADLE
Chairperson